DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 265 JC 900 609

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TITLE Student Retention at Piedmont Virginia Community College, 1989-1990. Research Report Number 7-90.
INSTITUTION Piedmont Virginia Community Coll., Charlottesville, VA. Office of Institutional Research and Planning.
PUB DATE Nov 90
NOTE 22p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Persistence; Community Colleges; Enrollment Trends; Full Time Students; Majors (Students); Minority Groups; Part Time Students; *School Holding Power; *Student Attrition; *Student Characteristics; Tables (Data); Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students; Withdrawal (Education)

ABSTRACT

In 1990, a study was conducted at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) to examine retention rates for 1989-90 in terms of a variety of institutional and student characteristics and to determine whether major differences existed between returning and non-returning students. Data were collected from end-of-term student files. Study findings included the following: (1) 51.4% of all students enrolled at PVCC and 83.4% of all full-time students during fall 1989 returned and completed the spring 1989 semester; (2) the retention rate for freshmen was 65.7%, while sophomores had a retention rate of 72.3%; (3) part-time students returned at a rate of 44.0%, with most of the returning students enrolled in on-campus programs leading toward degrees; (4) retention rates for 1989-90 were similar to retention rates for 1988-89 and to fall-to-winter retention rates from earlier years; (5) in 1988-89, the retention rate for full-time black students was 22.3% lower than that for full-time white students, while in 1989-90, there was only a 4.9% difference in the retention rates of full-time black students and white students; and (6) retention rates for programs leading to an associate of arts or associate of science degree were somewhat lower than those for programs leading to an associate of applied science degree. (JMC)

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PIEDMONT VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Retention at Piedmont Virginia Community College

1989-1990

Office of Institutional
Research and Planning
Piedmont Virginia
Community College
Charlottesville, Virginia

Research Report
Number 7-90

November 1990

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STUDENT RETENTION AT

PIEDMONT VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1989-1990

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Charlottesville, Virginia 22901
Research Report No. 7-90

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STUDENT RETENTION AT PIEDMONT VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE 1989-1990

INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth in a series of reports examining retention statistics at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) during the previous academic year.[1] Retention rates according to a variety of institutional and student characteristics are presented, and an effort is made to determine whether major differences exist between returning and non-returning students.

The term *retention rate*, as used in this report, refers to the percentage of students during one term who re-enroll during the subsequent term. In other words, the 1989-90 full-time student retention rate is the percentage of full-time students enrolled during Fall Semester 1989 who returned to PVCC and completed Spring Semester 1990.

Multiple retention measures are used because the retention rate for all students at a community college is misleading. At PVCC, over 80% of all students typically study part-time, and approximately 50% enroll as non-curricular students. Many of these students do not intend to re-enroll at the college during the subsequent term.

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[1]See Ronald B. Head, *Quarterly Student Retention at Piedmont Virginia Community College: 1985-86* (PVCC Institutional Research Report No. 4-86, November 1986); Ronald B. Head, *Quarterly Student Retention at Piedmont Virginia Community College: 1986-1987* (PVCC Institutional Research Report No. 8-87, November 1987); Ronald B. Head, *Quarterly Student Retention at Piedmont Virginia Community College: 1987-1988* (PVCC Institutional Research Report No. 10-88, November 1988); and Ronald B. Head, *Student Retention at Piedmont Virginia Community College: 1988-1989* (PVCC Institutional Research Report No. 8-89, November 1989).

Although multiple retention measures are reported, the emphasis in this study is upon full-time students. Full-time students are usually enrolled in degree programs and can be expected to re-enroll at the college each term until they graduate.

It should be noted that during 1989-90 the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) converted from a quarterly academic calendar to a semester calendar. Instead of four terms per year (Summer Quarter, Fall Quarter, Winter Quarter, and Spring Quarter), there are now only three terms (Summer Semester, Fall Semester, and Spring Semester). Under the quarter calendar, retention figures were collected twice, once between Fall Quarter and Winter Quarter, and once between Winter Quarter and Spring Quarter. Under the semester calendar, retention figures are collected only once, between Fall Semester and Spring Semester, and these are the annual, as well as semester, retention figures.

METHODOLOGY

Data in this report were collected by means of a Fortran program which used data from the STUDAGE file located on end-of-term AKT tapes. The source code for this program, as well as sample output, was included in last year's retention study.[2]

The advantage of using official end-of-term data is that retention statistics can then be compared to other end-of-term data. The total number of returning and non-returning students by category, as reported here, is the same number as reported in

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[2] *Op Cit.*, pp. 19-37.

the VCCS Student Enrollment Booklets and used in other PVCC institutional research reports.

As noted in previous studies, two limitations of both the program and the study should be noted. First, no effort has been made to link retention data to student objectives. Quite simply, data relating to student objectives were not conveniently available. Secondly, retention within a semester has not been measured. Students enrolling at the beginning of a semester but withdrawing before the end of the semester are not counted as enrolled students during that term. Similarly, students completing, say, the Fall Semester, re-enrolling during the Spring Semester, and then withdrawing midway through the Spring Semester are counted as non-returning students.

RETENTION RATES

Retention rates for the 1989-90 academic year are presented in Table 1. Included in this table are the retention rates for all students (headcount), full-time equivalent students (FTES), full-time students, curricular students, freshmen, and sophomores.

TABLE 1: PVCC RETENTION RATES (1989-90)

	Fall to Spring		
	No. Returning	No. Not Returning	Retention Rate (Pct.)
Headcount	2291	2163	51.4%
FTES	1211	589	67.3%
Full-Time Students	698	139	83.4%
Part-Time Students	1593	2024	44.0%
Curricular Students	1454	700	67.5%
Freshmen	1024	535	65.7%
Sophomores	430	165	72.3%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

Over one-half of all students enrolled at PVCC during Fall Semester 1989 returned and completed Spring Semester 1990. Approximately two of every three FTES (full-time equivalent students) returned, as did curricular students and freshmen.[3] The retention rate was slightly higher for sophomores. Over 80% of all full-time students returned to PVCC, as did over 40% of all part-time students.

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[3]One FTES is equivalent to 15 student credit hours. In this respect, the FTES retention rate is calculated as follows: (1) the number of credit hours for both returning and non-returning students are totalled; (2) The FTES figures for both returning and non-returning students are calculated (the credit hour figures are divided by 15); and (3) the retention rate is the percentage of returning FTES.

A full-time student is any student carrying a student load of 12 or more credit hours during any single term. A curricular student is any student actually enrolled in an educational program leading toward a degree, certificate, or diploma.

Retention figures for 1989-90 were quite similar to figures for 1988-89, as well as to figures from earlier years between Fall Quarter and Winter Quarter. As can be seen in Table 2, figures for 1984-85 through 1989-90 have been quite consistent.

TABLE 2: PVCC RETENTION RATES (1984-85 THROUGH 1989-90)

Category	1984-85 Fall to Winter	1984-85 Winter to Spring	1985-86 Fall to Winter	1985-86 Winter to Spring	1986-87 Fall to Winter	1986-87 Winter to Spring	1987-88 Fall to Winter	1987-88 Winter to Spring	1988-89 Fall to Spring	1989-90 Fall to Spring
FTES										
No. Returning	1004	918	1036	975	1089	986	1201	1105	1161	1211
No. Not Returning	520	380	514	417	547	435	570	451	537	589
Retention	65.9%	70.7%	66.8%	70.0%	66.6%	69.4%	67.8%	71.0%	68.4%	67.3%
HEADCOUNT										
No. Returning	1895	1761	1990	1857	2175	1923	2271	2078	2179	2291
No. Not Returning	1773	1454	1857	1524	1964	1722	2090	1646	2019	2163
Retention	51.7%	54.8%	51.7%	54.9%	52.5%	52.8%	52.1%	55.8%	51.9%	51.4%
CURRICULAR STUDENTS										
No. Returning	1159	1093	1227	1187	1272	1190	1434	1352	1503	1454
No. Not Returning	542	423	528	431	581	500	726	540	756	700
Retention	68.1%	72.1%	69.9%	73.4%	68.6%	70.4%	66.4%	71.5%	66.5%	67.5%
FULL-TIME STUDENTS										
No. Returning	551	508	553	534	562	532	678	600	673	698
No. Not Returning	133	72	103	84	113	65	121	81	127	139
Retention	80.6%	87.6%	84.3%	86.4%	83.3%	89.1%	84.9%	88.1%	84.1%	83.4%
FRESHMEN										
No. Returning	837	701	942	767	947	739	1087	934	1121	1024
No. Not Returning	443	343	437	351	462	403	573	437	601	535
Retention	65.4%	67.1%	68.3%	68.6%	67.2%	66.2%	65.5%	68.1%	65.1%	65.7%
SOPHOMORES										
No. Returning	322	392	285	420	325	401	347	418	382	430
No. Not Returning	99	80	91	80	119	97	153	103	155	165
Retention	76.5%	83.1%	75.8%	84.0%	73.2%	80.5%	69.4%	80.2%	71.1%	72.3%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

Table 3 presents 1989-90 retention rates for PVCC full-time students by demographic characteristics. The retention rate for women was slightly higher than that for men. With respect to race, the retention rate for full-time white students was higher than that for full-time black students. However, the retention rate for full-time black students was much higher in 1989-90 than it was in 1988-89. This is one indication that the college's minority recruitment and retention efforts, first initiated in 1989-90, are already having a positive effect.

TABLE 3: PVCC FULL-TIME STUDENT RETENTION RATES BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (1989-90)

Category	No. Returning	No. Not Returning	Retention (Pct.)
SEX			
Male	315	68	82.2%
Female	383	71	84.4%
RACE			
White	625	122	83.7%
Black	52	14	78.8%
Amer. Indian	1	0	100.0%
Asian/Pacific	16	0	100.0%
Hispanic	3	2	60.0%
Other	1	1	50.0%
AGE			
Under 18	1	2	33.3%
18-21	461	100	82.2%
22-24	98	19	83.8%
25-34	100	12	89.3%
35-44	29	5	85.3%
45-59	8	1	88.9%
Over 60	1	0	100.0%
Mean	22	21	--
Median	20	19	--
RESIDENCE			
Albemarle	278	56	83.2%
Buckingham	16	4	80.0%
Charlottesville	172	30	85.1%
Fluvanna	40	5	88.9%
Greene	29	5	85.3%
Louisa	27	7	79.4%
Nelson	21	4	84.0%
IN-DISTRICT	583	111	84.0%
Out-of-District	91	15	85.8%
Out-of-State	24	13	64.9%
TOTAL	698	139	83.4%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

Although the mean and median ages of returning and non-returning students were approximately the same, retention rates generally were slightly higher for older students, especially those over the age of 25. There seems to be little, if any, relationship between distance from PVCC and retention. The retention rates within the PVCC service region ranged from 79.4%

in Louisa County to 88.9% in Fluvanna County. The average retention rate for the service region as a whole was 84%.

Table 4 presents 1989-90 retention rates of PVCC full-time students by selected enrollment characteristics. As might be expected, the retention rate for returning students was higher than that for new students. As might also be expected, the retention rate for curricular students was higher than that for non-curricular (unclassified) students.

Retention rates according to demographic and enrollment characteristics were similar to rates reported last year, as well as to fall-to-winter rates reported for earlier years.

TABLE 4: PVCC FULL-TIME STUDENT RETENTION RATES BY ENROLLMENT CHARACTERISTICS (1989-90)

Category	No. Returning	No. Not Returning	Retention (Pct.)
New	256	73	77.8%
Returning	442	66	87.0%
Day	694	139	83.3%
Evening	4	0	100.0%
On-Campus	698	139	83.4%
Off-Campus	0	0	--
College Transfer	492	96	83.7%
Occup./Technical	145	25	85.3%
Developmental	7	1	87.5%
Unclassified	54	17	76.1%
A.A./A.S.	492	96	83.7%
A.A.S.	143	23	86.1%
Diploma	0	0	--
Certificate	2	2	50.0%
Developmental	7	1	87.5%
Unclassified	54	17	76.1%
TOTAL	698	139	83.4%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

Full-time student retention rates by academic program for 1989-90 are presented in Table 5. Retention rates for programs leading toward .he A.A. (Associate of Arts) or A.S. (Associate of Science) degrees were on the whole slightly lower than those for programs leading toward the A.A.S. (Associate of Applied Science) degree. Only one-half of all students enrolled in programs leading toward certificates during

Fall Semester 1989 returned to PVCC and completed Spring Semester 1990. The retention rate for all certificate programs was 50%, as compared to 100% in 1988-89. However, the actual numbers of returning and non-returning students within programs leading toward certificates or diplomas were so small that meaningful conclusions cannot be safely drawn.

Full-time student retention rates by academic program for the six-year period 1984-85 through 1989-90 are presented in Table 6. As can be seen, 1989-90 rates are similar to 1988-89 rates and to fall-to-winter rates for 1984-85 through 1987-88. In the few instances where the figures have not been consistent, the inconsistencies have been largely due to small numbers of students in individual, academic programs.

TABLE 5: PVCC FULL-TIME STUDENT RETENTION RATES BY ACADEMIC PROGRAM (1989-90)

Program	No. Returning	No. Not Returning	Retention (Pct.)
Business Admin.	156	22	87.6%
Education	23	5	82.1%
Fine Arts	18	9	66.7%
General Studies	76	13	85.4%
Liberal Arts	163	36	81.9%
Science	56	11	83.6%
A.A./A.S. TOTALS	492	96	83.7%
Accounting	11	2	84.6%
Computer Info. Systems	19	2	90.5%
Drafting & Design	5	2	71.4%
Electronics	7	2	77.8%
Management	22	4	84.6%
Marketing	7	2	77.8%
Nursing	38	2	95.0%
Office Systems	14	6	70.0%
Police Science	10	1	90.9%
Respiratory Therapy	9	0	100.0%
Science Laboratory	1	0	100.0%
A.A.S. TOTALS	143	23	86.1%
Arts & Crafts	1	0	100.0%
Career Studies	1	1	50.0%
Clerical Studies	0	1	0.0%
Drafting	0	0	--
Draft Design	0	0	--
Elec./Electronics	0	0	--
Elec. Servicing	0	0	--
Health Technology	0	0	--
Law Enforcement	0	0	--
DIPLOMA/CERT. TOTALS	2	2	50.0%
TOTAL	637	121	84.0%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

TABLE 6: PVCC FULL-TIME STUDENT RETENTION RATES BY ACADEMIC PROGRAM (1984-85 THROUGH 1989-90)

Program	Fall to Winter 1984-1985	1985-1986	1986-1987	1987-1988	Winter to Spring 1984-1985	1985-1986	1986-1987	1987-1988	Fall to Spring 1988-1989	Fall to Spring 1989-1990
Bus. Adm.	80%	87%	87%	87%	86%	90%	86%	91%	87%	88%
Education	79%	87%	93%	81%	89%	93%	90%	81%	85%	82%
Fine Arts	78%	93%	83%	86%	100%	73%	83%	94%	84%	67%
Gen. Stud.	79%	81%	80%	83%	86%	83%	89%	85%	80%	85%
Lib. Arts	85%	89%	82%	87%	94%	89%	86%	89%	87%	82%
Science	84%	93%	82%	85%	84%	84%	90%	85%	86%	84%
A.A./A.S.	81%	88%	84%	86%	88%	87%	87%	88%	85%	84%
Accounting	92%	100%	85%	79%	100%	100%	100%	100%	69%	85%
Comp. Prg.	--	67%	89%	77%	--	83%	94%	94%	81%	91%
Data Proc.	83%	100%	--	--	82%	80%	--	--	--	--
Draft & Des.	--	--	--	94%	--	--	--	69%	90%	71%
Elec.	76%	84%	69%	88%	83%	94%	89%	89%	73%	78%
Management	80%	74%	86%	79%	91%	78%	96%	95%	78%	85%
Marketing	--	--	88%	89%	--	--	86%	100%	82%	78%
Nursing	100%	89%	100%	97%	95%	90%	94%	90%	100%	95%
Office Sys.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	77%	70%
Police Sc.	53%	100%	84%	95%	79%	94%	94%	79%	85%	91%
Resp. Th.	96%	94%	87%	82%	100%	100%	92%	100%	67%	100%
Secretary	100%	77%	85%	77%	88%	93%	85%	85%	--	--
Science Lab.	--	--	--	50%	--	--	--	100%	67%	100%
A.A.S.	84%	81%	86%	85%	89%	89%	93%	89%	83%	86%
Art/Craft	100%	--	100%	--	50%	--	100%	--	100%	100%
Career St.	--	75%	100%	89%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%
Child Care	0%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cler. St.	100%	--	--	--	--	--	--	100%	--	--
Drafting	--	100%	100%	--	50%	100%	100%	0%	--	--
Draft Des.	80%	86%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	--	100%	--
Elec./Elec.	--	--	--	--	75%	--	--	--	--	--
Elec. Svc.	--	0%	--	--	--	--	100%	50%	--	--
Health	100%	100%	100%	--	100%	50%	100%	--	100%	--
Law Enf.	--	--	--	--	--	100%	100%	--	--	--
DIP./CERT.	82%	79%	100%	90%	79%	93%	100%	50%	100%	50%
TOTAL	81%	86%	85%	86%	88%	88%	89%	88%	85%	85%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

Retention rates by academic program for 1988-89 are shown for curricular students in Table 7, for freshmen in Table 8, and for sophomores in Table 9. As can be seen, the retention rates for curricular students enrolled in programs leading toward the A.A. or A.S. degree were slightly higher than the rates for students enrolled in programs leading toward the A.A.S. degree and much higher than the rates for those enrolled in certificate programs. The same was true with respect to freshman and sophomore retention rates, though A.A.S. retention rates for sophomores were nearly the same as A.A./-A.S. rates. It should be noted that retention rates for certificate programs may be misleading due to the small numbers or returning and non-returning students involved.

TABLE 7: PVCC CURRICULAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES BY ACADEMIC PROGRAM (1989-90)

Program	No. Returning	No. Not Returning	Retention (Pct.)
Business Admin.	269	91	74.7%
Education	49	20	71.0%
Fine Arts	36	22	62.1%
General Studies	250	165	60.2%
Liberal Arts	276	104	72.6%
Science	121	37	76.6%
A.A./A.S. TOTALS	1001	439	69.5%
Accounting	43	21	67.2%
Computer Info. Systems	65	54	54.6%
Drafting & Design	19	9	67.9%
Electronics	32	19	62.7%
Management	78	61	56.1%
Marketing	20	13	60.6%
Nursing	103	15	87.3%
Office Systems	29	20	59.2%
Police Science	24	12	66.7%
Respiratory Therapy	18	1	94.7%
Science Laboratory	1	0	100.0%
A.A.S. TOTALS	432	225	65.8%
Arts & Crafts	2	1	66.7%
Career Studies	16	24	40.0%
Clerical Studies	2	3	40.0%
Drafting	1	2	33.3%
Draft Design	0	1	0.0%
Elec./Electronics	0	0	--
Elec. Servicing	0	0	--
Health Technology	0	4	0.0%
Law Enforcement	0	1	0.0%
DIPLOMA/CERT. TOTALS	21	36	36.8%
TOTAL	1454	700	67.5%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

TABLE 8: PVCC FRESHMAN RETENTION RATES BY ACADEMIC PROGRAM (1989-90)

Program	No. Returning	No. Not Returning	Retention (Pct.)
Business Admin.	192	63	75.3%
Education	32	14	69.6%
Fine Arts	28	19	59.6%
General Studies	206	139	59.7%
Liberal Arts	203	80	71.7%
Science	80	26	75.5%
A.A./A.S. TOTALS	741	341	68.5%
Accounting	25	16	61.0%
Computer Info. Systems	43	41	51.2%
Drafting & Design	11	6	64.7%
Electronics	24	19	55.8%
Management	47	38	55.3%
Marketing	10	7	58.8%
Nursing	57	6	90.5%
Office Systems	23	15	60.5%
Police Science	14	10	58.3%
Respiratory Therapy	8	0	100.0%
Science Laboratory	0	0	--
A.A.S. TOTALS	262	158	62.4%
Arts & Crafts	2	1	66.7%
Career Studies	16	24	40.0%
Clerical Studies	2	3	40.0%
Drafting	1	2	33.3%
Draft Design	0	1	0.0%
Elec./Electronics	0	0	--
Elec. Servicing	0	0	--
Health Technology	0	4	0.0%
Law Enforcement	0	1	0.0%
DIPLOMA/CERT. TOTALS	21	36	36.8%
TOTAL	1024	535	65.7%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

TABLE 9: PVCC SOPHOMORE RETENTION RATES BY ACADEMIC PROGRAM (1989-90)

Program	No. Returning	No. Not Returning	Retention (Pct.)
Business Admin.	77	28	73.3%
Education	17	6	73.9%
Fine Arts	8	3	72.7%
General Studies	44	26	62.9%
Liberal Arts	73	24	75.3%
Science	41	11	78.8%
A.A./A.S. TOTALS	260	98	72.6%
Accounting	18	5	78.3%
Computer Info. Systems	22	13	62.9%
Drafting & Design	8	3	72.7%
Electronics	8	0	100.0%
Management	31	23	57.4%
Marketing	10	6	62.5%
Nursing	46	9	83.6%
Office Systems	6	5	54.5%
Police Science	10	2	83.3%
Respiratory Therapy	10	1	90.9%
Science Laboratory	1	0	100.0%
A.A.S. TOTALS	170	67	71.7%
Arts & Crafts	0	0	--
Career Studies	0	0	--
Clerical Studies	0	0	--
Drafting	0	0	--
Draft Design	0	0	--
Elec./Electronics	0	0	--
Elec. Servicing	0	0	--
Health Technology	0	0	--
Law Enforcement	0	0	--
DIPLOMA/CERT. TOTALS	0	0	--
TOTAL	430	165	72.3%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ENROLLMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF RETURNING AND NON-RETURNING STUDENTS

Tables 10 and 11 present distributions of both full-time and part-time returning and non-returning students by demographic and enrollment characteristics. Percentages in these tables are by column by group.

TABLE 10: PVCC RETURNING AND NON-RETURNING STUDENTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND FULL-TIME/PART-TIME STATUS (1989-90)

	Full-Time Students				Part-Time Students			
	Returning		Non-Returning		Returning		Non-Returning	
Category	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
SEX								
Male	315	45.1%	68	48.9%	564	35.4%	724	35.8%
Female	383	54.9%	71	51.1%	1029	64.6%	1300	64.2%
RACE								
White	625	89.5%	122	87.8%	1429	89.7%	1770	87.5%
Black	52	7.4%	14	10.1%	127	8.0%	216	10.7%
Amer. Indian	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1	0.0%
Asian/Pacific.	16	2.3%	0	0.0%	25	1.6%	21	1.0%
Hispanic	3	0.4%	2	1.4%	6	0.4%	10	0.5%
Other	1	0.1%	1	0.7%	5	0.3%	6	0.3%
AGE								
Under 18	1	0.1%	2	1.4%	36	2.3%	11	0.5%
18-21	461	66.0%	100	71.9%	256	16.1%	269	13.3%
22-24	98	14.0%	19	13.7%	165	10.4%	236	11.7%
25-34	100	14.3%	12	8.6%	567	35.6%	632	31.2%
35-44	29	4.2%	5	3.6%	379	23.8%	519	25.6%
45-59	8	1.1%	1	0.7%	153	9.6%	280	13.8%
Over 60	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	38	2.4%	77	3.8%
Mean	22	--	21	--	32	--	809	--
Median	20	--	19	--	30	--	32	--
RESIDENCE								
Albemarle	278	39.8%	56	40.3%	643	40.4%	809	40.0%
Buckingham	16	2.3%	4	2.9%	21	1.3%	32	1.6%
Charlottesville	172	24.6%	30	21.6%	446	28.0%	567	28.0%
Fluvanna	40	5.7%	5	3.6%	69	4.3%	129	6.4%
Greene	29	4.2%	5	3.6%	108	6.8%	130	6.4%
Louisa	27	3.9%	7	5.0%	56	3.5%	70	3.5%
Nelson	21	3.0%	4	2.9%	55	3.5%	73	3.6%
IN-DISTRICT	583	83.5%	111	79.9%	1398	87.8%	1810	89.4%
Out-of-District	91	13.0%	15	10.8%	159	10.0%	184	9.1%
Out-of-State	24	3.4%	13	9.4%	36	2.3%	30	1.5%
TOTAL	698	100.0%	139	100.0%	1593	100.0%	2024	100.0%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes.

Demographically, returning and non-returning students, whether full-time or part-time, were quite similar. This was not the case last year. In 1988-89, a much higher proportion of full-time returning students were white than were full-time non-

returning students. The percentage of full-time returning blacks was 6.2%, as compared to 18.9% for full-time non-returning blacks. In 1989-90, the percentages were much closer together. Seven and four-tenths percent of full-time returning students were black, as compared to 10.1% for full-time non-returning blacks.

TABLE 11: PVCC RETURNING AND NON-RETURNING STUDENTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND FULL-TIME/PART-TIME STATUS (1989-90)

	Full-Time Students				Part-Time Students			
	Returning		Non-Returning		Returning		Non-Returning	
Category	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
New	256	36.7%	73	52.5%	402	25.2%	762	37.6%
Returning	442	63.3%	66	47.5%	1191	74.8%	1262	62.4%
Day	694	99.4%	139	100.0%	992	62.3%	970	47.9%
Evening	4	0.6%	0	0.0%	601	37.7%	1054	52.1%
On-Campus	698	100.0%	139	100.0%	1284	80.6%	1340	66.2%
Off-Campus	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	309	19.4%	684	33.8%
Transfer	492	70.5%	96	69.1%	509	32.0%	343	16.9%
Occup./Tech.	145	20.8%	25	18.0%	308	19.3%	236	11.7%
Developmental	7	1.0%	1	0.7%	9	0.6%	13	0.6%
Unclassified	54	7.7%	17	12.2%	767	48.1%	1432	70.8%
A.A./A.S.	492	70.5%	96	69.1%	509	32.0%	343	16.9%
A.A.S.	143	20.5%	23	16.5%	289	18.1%	202	10.0%
Diploma	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Certificate	2	0.3%	2	1.4%	19	1.2%	33	1.6%
Developmental	7	1.0%	1	0.7%	9	0.6%	13	0.6%
Unclassified	54	7.7%	17	12.2%	767	48.1%	1432	70.8%
TOTAL	698	100.0%	139	100.0%	1593	100.0%	2024	100.0%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes.

With respect to enrollment characteristics, returning and non-returning students differed most significantly according to new/returning status. As can be seen in Table 11, the proportion of new to returning students was much higher among non-returning students than among returning students. This is hardly surprising, however, as it has already been shown that retention rates for new students were lower than those for returning students (see Table 4).

Part-time returning and non-returning students differed more than did full-time returning and non-returning students. While the proportions of day to evening, on-campus to off-campus and curricular to non-curricular, were approximately the same for full-time returning and non-returning students, part-time non-returning students were more likely to study off-campus during the evening. This should not be too surprising, though, since a number of courses offered during the evening off-campus are designed for personal satisfaction as opposed to fulfilling curricular requirements.

CONCLUSIONS

Retention rates for 1989-90 were similar to retention rates for 1988-89 and to fall-to-winter retention rates from earlier years. Slightly over one-half of all students enrolled during one term re-enroll at PVCC and complete the subsequent term. Over 80% of all full-time students enrolled during one term re-enroll at PVCC and complete the subsequent term. Approximately two of every three curricular students return from one term to the next. The retention rate for freshmen exceeds 60%, and for sophomores, it exceeds 70%. Part-time students who return to the college from one term to the next are usually enrolled in programs leading toward degrees and study on the college's main campus. Part-time, non-returning students, on the other hand, are usually non-curricular and study off-campus during the evening.

One trend, reported in last year's study, was reversed in 1989-90. In 1988-89, the retention rate for full-time black students was 22.3% lower than that for full-time white students. The rate was also 8.4% lower than the fall-to-winter rate for full-time black students in 1987-88. However, in 1989-90 the retention rate for full-time black students was only 4.9% lower than that for full-time white students. Clearly, the initiatives implemented by the college in 1989-90 with respect to minority recruitment and retention have already begun to succeed.

PVCC Institutional Research Brief November 1990

STUDENT RETENTION AT PIEDMONT VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE 1989-90

This brief highlights major findings of *Student Retention at Piedmont Virginia Community College: 1989-90* by Ronald B. Head (PVCC Institutional Research Report No. 7-90, November 1990). This study is conducted annually to provide retention rates according to a variety of institutional and student characteristics and to determine whether major differences exist between returning and non-returning students according to these characteristics.

The term *retention rate*, as used in the study, refers to the percentage of students enrolled during one term who re-enroll and complete the subsequent term. In other words, the full-time student retention rate for 1989-90 is the percentage of full-time students enrolled during Fall Semester 1989 who returned to PVCC and completed Spring Semester 1990.

Table 1 presents 1989-90 retention rates for all students, full-time equivalent students (FTES), full-time students, part-time students, curricular students, freshmen, and sophomores.

Retention rates for 1989-90 were similar to retention rates for 1988-89, as well as to fall-to-winter retention rates from earlier years. Slightly over one-half of all students enrolled during one term re-enroll at PVCC and complete the subsequent term. Over 80% of all full-time students enrolled during one term re-enroll at PVCC and complete the subsequent term. Approximately two of every three curricular students return from one term to the next. The retention rate for freshmen exceeds 60%, and for sophomores, it exceeds 70%. Part-time

TABLE 1: PVCC RETENTION RATES (1989-90)

	Fall to Spring		
	No. Returning	No. Not Returning	Retention Rate (Pct.)
Headcount	2291	2163	51.4%
FTES	1211	589	67.3%
Full-Time Students	698	139	83.4%
Part-Time Students	1593	2024	44.0%
Curricular Students	1454	700	67.5%
Freshmen	1024	535	65.7%
Sophomores	430	165	72.3%

SOURCE: VCCS end-of-term AKT tapes. The retention rate refers to the percentage of students returning from one term to the next (returning students divided by both returning and non-returning students).

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students who return to the college from one term to the next are usually enrolled in programs leading toward degrees and study on the college's main campus. Part-time, non-returning students, on the other hand, are usually non-curricular and study off-campus during the evening.

One trend, reported in last year's study, was reversed in 1989-90. In 1988-89, the retention rate for full-time black students was 22.3% lower than that for full-time white students. The rate was also 8.4% lower than the fall-to-winter rate for full-time black students in 1987-88. However, in 1989-90, the retention rate for full-time black students was only 4.9% lower than that for full-time white students. Clearly, the initiatives implemented by the college in 1989-90 with respect to minority recruitment and retention have already begun to succeed.

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March 29, 1991